

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 OMB-01 PM-05 OES-09 SP-02 SS-15
STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAC-00
INRE-00 /112 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:CMONROE:DWL
APPROVED BY NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL
NEA/ARP:JZIOLKOWSKI
-----098990 151659Z /50

O 151629Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
INFO USLO RIYADH IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 206172

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, JO, LE, SA

SUBJECT: UNPAID TAPLINE DEBTS: JORDAN AND LEBANON

REF: A) BEIRUT 4656, B) BEIRUT 4699

1. WASHINGTON ARAMCO REPRESENTATIVE CONTACTED NEA/ARN ON AUGUST 11 AND AGAIN ON 8/14 TO DISCUSS TAPLINE PROBLEMS IN JORDAN AND LEBANON. SINCE FIRST OF YEAR, JORDAN HAS ACCUMULATED SOME DOLS 70 MILLION IN DEBTS TO ARAMCO FOR OIL SHIPMENTS THROUGH TAPLINE. WHILE JORDAN HAS MADE NOMINAL PAYMENTS ON THIS ACCOUNT (DOLS 2 MILLION PER MONTH), QUARTERLY BILLS SENT TO JORDAN HAVE NOT BEEN PAID.
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SIMILARLY, LEBANON HAS SOME DOLS 30 MILLION OUTSTANDING IN DEBTS TO ARAMCO (DOLS 40 MILLION ACCORDING TO REFTTEL B). SINCE OUTSTANDING BILLS TO JORDAN AND LEBANON HAVE NOW REACHED DOLS 100 MILLION, SHAREHOLDERS ARE CONCERNED.

2. ARAMCO REPRESENTATIVES RAISED SUBJECT OF JORDANIAN AND LEBANESE NON-PAYMENT OF OIL BILLS WITH SAUDIS A FEW DAYS

AGO. ARAMCO APPARENTLY WANTED TO KEEP SAUDIS FULLY INFORMED OF SITUATION AS WELL AS GIVE SAUDIS OPPORTUNITY TO SETTLE MATTER BEFORE ARAMCO FOLLOWED UP MEASURES FOR GOJ AND GOL. ARAMCO WAS APPARENTLY ADVISED BY SAUDI DEPUTY MINISTER OF PETROLEUM ABDUL AZIZ TO PROCEED WITH ITS OWN PLANS.

3. ARAMCO PLANS TO DELIVER LETTERS TO BOTH GOJ AND GOL ON AUGUST 16. ARAMCO LETTERS INDICATE THAT ARAMCO PLANS TO TAKE STEPS TO DISCONTINUE DELIVERY OF OIL THROUGH TAPLINE. ARAMCO REPRESENTATIVE INDICATED THAT CONTENTS OF LETTER HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED WITH GOJ, WHO FAVORED THIS APPROACH SO THAT JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER BADRAN COULD HAND CARRY LETTER TO PRINCE FAHD AND MAKE PLEA FOR THIS YEAR'S OIL SUBSIDY PAYMENT. REFTEL B INDICATES THAT GOL HAS BEEN APPRISED OF ARAMCO'S INTENTIONS AS WELL.

4. DEPARTMENT COMMENT: WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ARAMCO IS LOOKING FOR ANY PARTICULAR ACTION ON OUR PART AT THE PRESENT TIME, BUT CLEARLY WISHES TO KEEP DEPARTMENT (AND POSTS) FULLY INFORMED OF THE CURRENT PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES AND THE MEASURES WHICH THEY ARE TAKING TO SETTLE THEM. CHRISTOPHER

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